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The Continuity of the Church, and
its Present Position, in England

A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone

AT THE ORDINARY VISITATION

IN APRIL, MDCCCLXXXIV

TO WHICH IS APPENDED

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED TO THE

*CHURCHWARDENS AND SIDESMEN OF THE ARCH-
DEACONRY*

IN APRIL, MDCCCLXXXV

WITH NOTES

BY

BENJAMIN HARRISON, M.A.

ARCHDEACON OF MAIDSTONE

RIVINGTONS

WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON

MDCCCLXXXVI

TO
THE RURAL DEANS AND CLERGY,
WITH THE
CHURCHWARDENS AND SIDESMEN, OF THE ARCHDEACONRY
OF MAIDSTONE,
THIS
Charge and Address
ARE INSCRIBED,
WITH THE STEADFAST HOPE AND HUMBLE PRAYER THAT THE
DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY AND THE COUNTY OF KENT
MAY BE FOUND EVER FAITHFUL,
IN THE HOUR OF TRIAL,
TO THE CAUSE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD,
PLANTED BY HIS PROVIDENCE IN THIS LAND.

PRECINCTS, CANTERBURY,
March XVI. M. DCCC. LXXXVI.

A CHARGE

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

The present year being the fourth since the last Visitation of the Archbishop, it would not, in the ordinary course, have been my duty—my privilege, I might rather say—to call you together, as well as the Churchwardens, to my Easter Visitation. The Churchwardens would have been cited, by an arrangement adopted a good many years ago, in order to avoid an inconvenience which had been felt when their admission to their office was deferred until the Diocesan held his Visitation in the autumn. Instead of this I am holding now the customary Visitation of Clergy and Churchwardens together; our Most Reverend Diocesan having judged that he should best consult the interests of the Diocese, and speak on matters regarding it with the fuller knowledge, and therefore with the more authority, if he postponed his Primary Visitation to another year.

The usual Visitation, therefore, of the Archdeacon being in hand, I may, perhaps, in passing express my satisfaction that a Bill which, for four successive years, was laid on the table of the House of Commons, offering—very needlessly—what were

called “ facilities ” for the admission of Churchwardens to their office, has not made its appearance again this session. It was a Bill which, in common with my brethren of the Lower House of Convocation, I could not doubt, would in its operation seriously affect the character of the Churchwarden’s office, and tend infallibly to the discouragement, and ultimately to the discontinuance, of these our yearly gatherings. Other Bills of a like kind—“ hardy annuals,” as we may regard them—have put up their heads once more this spring ; but the Churchwardens’ Bill has given no signs of life in the Parliamentary border, and may, therefore, I think, be regarded as not merely dormant but dead. As far as we are concerned in this Archdeaconry, my Reverend Brethren, I see no indications of any wish on the part of our Lay brethren for a change in our arrangements ; and we of the Clergy, on our part, I am sure, would greatly regret the termination, or interruption, of what gives us a happy opportunity of meeting together on the Church’s common ground, and strengthening the bonds of our union in Christ, as members of His one body, and thereby “ members,” in Him, “ one of another.”¹ In the absence, for the most part, as we may thankfully acknowledge, of matters of grave complaint, at the Visitation, to be dealt with in the way of ecclesiastical discipline, we are the more free to avail ourselves

¹ Rom. xii. 5 ; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27.

of the opportunity of personal communication, if need be, between those in official authority and those in responsible charge of the affairs of the several parishes, and, in particular, of the fabrics of the churches, as regards the Churchwardens, or the chancels, in regard to the Rectors. And it cannot but be for the benefit of us all to be taken from time to time, by occasions like these, out of the isolation of our several—perhaps in some cases somewhat secluded—scenes of duty; to be reminded of obligations and privileges which we have in common, and of sacred interests of the Church, as established, by God's mercy and providence, amongst us; or of that larger spiritual body of which it is a branch, and which is the object, if we are faithful members of it, of our constant labours and affectionate prayers,—“the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth.”

I have just alluded to certain legislative propositions and designs which are opened upon us year by year. We are duly reminded, accordingly, for the present session of Parliament, of measures which I have thought it right before now to call attention to, lest we find ourselves taken by surprise, and conquered in detail, by fragments and portions—really such, however they may disguise their true character—of a scheme of “disestablishment and disendowment by instalment and piecemeal.” We have, then, now the “Cemeteries Bill,” and the “Burial Fees Bill,” as well as the

“Extraordinary Tithe Bill,” brought again into the House of Commons, with others which require careful watching; but we have also the somewhat bolder attempts which reveal themselves from time to time, to deal more summarily with the general question of Disestablishment. Besides the attack lately made on the position of the Bishops in the House of Peers, and which won no success in the Commons, we are threatened with a Resolution of the House of Commons, prudently preferred to a Bill; the proposed Resolution being to this effect, “that the establishment of the Church of England by law imposes upon Parliament duties which it cannot effectually discharge; deprives the Church of the power of managing her own affairs; inflicts injustice on a large section of the community; and is injurious to the political and religious interests of the nation; and that therefore it ought to be no longer maintained.” We need not, I think, my Reverend Brethren, be under serious apprehension of such a Resolution being carried at the present time in the House of Commons. Even if it were fortunate enough to find a chance opening for its discussion, amidst the hopeless complications of public business,—especially with the difficulties and responsibilities now pressing heavily upon our country, with Ireland close to her side, and Egypt looking to her in despair from afar off,—even under such circumstances we could hardly anticipate any other result than an unsuccessful assault all along

the line (as the phrase is) ; to be followed speedily by a renewal of the petty and harassing guerilla warfare which has characterized the Liberationist tactics of late years. In regard, however, to the multifarious bills now before Parliament relating to the Church, I cannot do better than again recommend to your careful attention the statements put forth from time to time by the "Church Defence Institution," or referred to in its monthly publication, entitled "The National Church." The Executive Committee has lately circulated a summary of twelve Bills now before Parliament and four Resolutions to be proposed in the House of Commons ; these Resolutions having regard, severally, to the Church of England in Wales, to the Established Church of England (the Resolution just now quoted), to the Established Church of Scotland, and finally to the question of Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister. On the subject last named, the House of Lords having, last year, on the third reading, rejected the Bill, there is to be a Resolution of the House of Commons attempted now, declaring its opinion that a "measure of relief is urgently called for."² In regard to the Bills now before the House, several of which, in the judgment of the Executive Committee of the Church Defence Institution, "most prejudicially affect" the Church's interests—more particularly the three before specified, the Cemeteries Bill, the

² See Note A.

Burial Fees Bill, and the Tithe-Rent Extraordinary Bill,—the Committee have put forth a separate paper, explaining clearly the provisions of these Bills severally; with respect to which they “suggest that it is highly expedient that action should be taken against them with as little delay as possible.” The two Burial Bills are down for a second reading on Wednesday, the 25th of June; and, in the opinion of the Committee, “the most uncompromising opposition should be offered to both” these Bills.

With regard to matters touching Church endowment, it might not unnaturally have been expected that, the signs of the times, as we may say, being what they are, men would have been found indisposed to sacrifice their individual interests and private property, amidst so great uncertainty what would become—within a few years perhaps—of their manifold and munificent gifts. Especially when it is to be borne in mind that what they had seen going on, in England, on a large scale, under the influence of a very resolute spirit, intolerant of exceptions or qualifications, was not merely the taking away from the Church by the State of privileges and possessions which the State in earlier days had given her: far beyond this, the State was seen taking away that which the State never gave her, and which was the Church’s own inheritance; and this with no thought or pretence of compensation to be

made her. I would specify particularly what were originally the "Schools of the Church," her Universities, formed by her own religious teachers: with their separate Colleges founded, in after-times, by Bishops of the Church, out of their own episcopal resources; and specially designed for the supply of a well-instructed Clergy to serve, in the several Dioceses of these Prelates, to the honour of God and the edification of His people, by the maintenance of the ancient faith, and the study of Holy Scripture and of sound theology. Notwithstanding all this, however, God's servants—I speak, of course, of the laity in particular—have been found ready to give pledges freely, of their own substance, to what might have seemed a most uncertain future; a phenomenon which can be explained only by the existence of a deeply fixed belief in a Divine power and a continuous life in the Church of God; an undoubting recognition Who it was to whom it had been said of old, "The Lord shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will offerings with an holy worship: the dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning."³

When the "Church Building Society," as it is now always called, was first set on foot, some sixty or seventy years ago, by a few zealous Churchmen, who refused to recognize what to

³ Ps. cx. 2, 3, P.B. Version. Comp. A.V.

most men at that time seemed the hopelessness of any attempt to overtake the arrears of past neglect, and the growth of a population enormously increased, during the long period of the great Continental War, it was designated by them as a “Society for the *Enlargement*, Building, and Repairing of Churches and Chapels;” the enlargement of existing churches being the utmost which these faithful sons of the Church ventured to contemplate as its principal object. The erection of large and costly churches was provided for, to a certain extent, by the Parliamentary grant of a million of money, supplemented afterwards by the grant of an additional half-million; the whole designed to be a nation’s thankoffering—this, my Brethren, ought not in these days to be forgotten—for the termination of the war, and the restoration of peace to England and to Europe. But with very slender means at the disposal of the new Society—for it was indeed “the day of small things,”⁴ though brightened to a few faithful Churchmen by a gleam of faith and hope,—it went on in its work till the number of new churches yearly undertaken greatly exceeded the number of churches enlarged. And what enormous sums have been expended within the last forty years in the enlarging, repairing, and adorning of churches, with new fabrics rising in every quarter reflecting the character of the old, in the

⁴ Zech. iv. 10.

revival of the spirit which, in past ages, reared those noble buildings, as tabernacles for the dwelling of the Lord of hosts in the midst of the congregations of His people, has become known of late years by the returns moved for in Parliament by the late Lord Hampton and the Right Honourable John Gellibrand Hubbard. Still more recently the work has been carried on, with the aid of a special fund of the Incorporated Church Building Society, for the erection of Mission Churches and School Chapels in our great towns, or among the widely scattered population of the large country parishes, of which there are so many in this Archdeaconry, where hamlets have sprung up, especially on new lines of railway, at a distance from the parish church.

My parochial Visitations, for the three years last past, have been of the Deanery of Croydon, and of the two divisions of the Deanery of Dartford, severally ; and as I have gone from one parish to another, I have seen with much satisfaction the subsidiary provision thus made, for the extension of the Church's ministrations to the outlying and outcast, involving, of course, a considerable addition to the labours of the parish priest. I have also carefully examined the returns made to me lately by the several Rural Deans,⁵ for the information of a Joint Committee of both Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury,

⁵ See Note B.

under the active care of the Bishop of Rochester. In these last I have found everywhere signs of an earnest desire, and careful and well-considered arrangements, for the more effectual supply of the spiritual necessities of “the masses” of our people. The inquiries made were specifically these—“Whether there be, in each” Rural “Deanery, any considerable number of people who are not reached by the ordinary services and methods of the Church, and if so, from what cause; what attempts have been made to reach them; what methods have been adopted in each case; and what success has attended such attempts.” There was reason to think, some time ago, that statistics would be sought for by some “who wished not well to our Sion,” in regard to the outlying parts of our large country parishes, with a view to show how the Church had been wanting in care for these her scattered children; inquiries which were intended to follow up those of which the results had been published in regard to the principal towns of the county of Kent. The results then arrived at,—though the process of inquiry was not one of commendable fairness,—were not exactly such as were looked for;⁶ and I believe it may be safely anticipated that, were such inquiries now extended in the direction sought, the anticipations formed would for the most part—I would in charity say—be *agreeably* disappointed.

⁶ See Charge delivered in May, 1879, pp. 50—52; and Note C.

Whether we have regard to our overgrown towns or our rural parishes, whether we look at home or abroad, it is, we may, I think, thankfully say,—in acknowledgment of the only Power which hath “wrought all our works in us,”⁷ and to which we trust to “perfect that which concerneth” us,⁸—that it is a voice which hath come to our spiritual mother, the Church of England, like that which the Spirit of prophecy addressed, in old time, to the Church of God—“Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations : spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes ; for thou shalt spread forth on the right hand and on the left ; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”⁹

As instances of what has been doing among ourselves—and they are only examples of what, we know, has been going on everywhere—at Ide Hill, in the winter before last, a mission-room was opened in the hamlet called Goathurst Common, and services were held there on Sunday and Thursday evenings ; as many as seventy persons being gathered there. In the neighbouring parish of Otford, the schoolroom at Dunton Green has been enlarged at a cost of 250*l.*, and used for afternoon services. In the parish of Marden, the Chainhurst Schoolroom has been licensed by the Archbishop for Divine worship ; and there is

⁷ Isa. xxvi. 12.⁸ Ps. cxxxviii. 8.⁹ Isa. liv. 2, 3.

service held there every Sunday evening. At Sandhurst Green an iron mission hall has been opened, distant about a mile from the Parish Church, and holding three hundred ; it is designed for Sunday evening services, the attendance at these having outgrown the accommodation at the schoolroom, and will be available for services or other parish purposes at other times. At Laylands, in the parish of Sidcup, a mission room capable of holding from sixty to seventy persons has been erected, and Sunday evening service held there. Mission services are also held in the National School, which on Sundays is fitted up as a school-chapel ; and, by licence from the Archbishop, the Holy Communion is celebrated monthly at 8 a.m. At Sittingbourne, a building called the "Mission Room" has been erected at the east end of the town, where there is gathering a large population of working-men, and has been licensed for Divine Service, which is held in it on Sundays ; there being for this purpose, as is commonly arranged in such cases, at the east end of the building an apse which is shut off from the room by a revolving shutter. The room is used on weekdays for meetings of various kinds, and as an infants' school ; in the latter capacity accommodating 190 children. The entire building, including a smaller class, or committee, room, is erected on part of a site given by a landowner ; and a frontage has been reserved on which a

church may hereafter be built. In the parish of Wrotham an iron room, for weekday services and other parochial uses, has been erected on Wrotham Hill by a parishioner.

Meanwhile larger works, and some involving considerable cost, have been going on and are completed. At Riverhead, the requisite piece of ground having become attainable, an important addition has been made to the church, including a chancel, with organ-chamber and vestry, and increasing the accommodation for worshippers by about sixty sittings. It was consecrated by the Archbishop on the 14th of July, the first consecration performed by his Grace in the Diocese. Later in the year, on the 1st of October, took place the consecration of the new Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Croydon, which had been opened under licence by the late Archbishop in October, 1881. The porch, tower, spire, and vestries are still to be built, to complete a noble fabric. A few days after, the Archbishop reopened the old Parish Church of St. Mary, Bexley; the repair and restoration of which had been taken in hand as soon as the new Church of St. John was finished. The old Parish Church of Bexley had been strangely disfigured, and the space within it most unjustly appropriated in an extraordinary way by three or four faculty pews, of great size, and, like the rest of the pewing, of inconvenient height. The claims thus created were adjusted

by the Archbishop's Court of Faculties. The Archbishop preached at the reopening, on Saturday, the 6th of October. In his sermon he recalled to mind that a church had existed on that site for a thousand and fifty years; the manor of Bexley having been granted by King Cenulph to Wilfred, Archbishop of Canterbury, who used it to build and endow a church. This fabric was of wood. The second, of stone, dated from the time of Edward the Confessor, 300 years later; when certain alterations were made, and works carried out, remains of which they could see that day. The greater part of the present building was erected prior to the twelfth century, reaching the height of its glory in the thirteenth century; and the endeavour, in the present restoration, had been to reproduce the church as it existed at the last-named date. They were gathered together, as the Archbishop reminded his congregation, "upon a spot rich in history; a spot upon which, since the year 830, there had been a succession of ministers and congregations until that very hour." Well might the preacher take his text from the psalm to which I have already alluded; a psalm recording the word of promise, and the oath made on high, unto Him to whom it was said, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Among the stained-glass windows in the church, it may be fitting to mention, is one in memory of Camden the historian, who bequeathed

his estate at Bexley to found the Professorship of Ancient History in the University of Oxford : and out of the University chest, accordingly, a large and liberal sum has been given for the restoration of the church. All the work in the restored church is beautifully wrought ; the church is full of special gifts by individual residents, as expressions of their personal thankfulness, and an offering for the glory of God.

In this connection I may mention several adornments of churches by memorial windows, embodying sacred memories and pious purposes. In Bexley Church, I might add to the notice just given of Camden, that another window is in memory of the late Mr. William Spottiswoode, President of the Royal Society, presented by his widow. In Biddenden Church on All Saints' Day was exhibited the stained glass in the west window, placed there in memory of the late Rector and his wife, by their daughter and only child. There is also a brass tablet which has been placed on the south wall of the chancel, with an inscription declaring it to be—"To the glory of God, and in affectionate remembrance of James Boys, M.A., Rector of Biddenden forty years, sometime Rural Dean, who died February 13th, 1882, aged 89 years ; also of Sarah, his wife, daughter of the Rev. John Lightfoot, Rector of Gotham, and Perpetual Curate of Uxbridge, who died July 2nd, 1868, aged

eighty years." In like manner the church of Bexley has been enriched with three stained-glass windows, in the north and south aisles, of two lights and tracery, of a memorial character. In the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Bromley, amidst various improvements carried out in the chancel at the expense of Sir Edward Scott, of Sundridge Park, lately deceased, were seven windows in the apse filled with stained glass. In the parish of East Malling, in the Church of Holy Trinity, New Hythe, two small stained-glass windows have been placed in the chancel; one in memory of the Rev. William Lewis Wigan, who was Vicar of the parish when this district church was built, the figure being that of Daniel, the "man greatly beloved;" the other of five sisters, with the figure of St. John the Evangelist, described as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." In the Church of St. Peter, Fordcomb, with other improvements made, including vestries and organ-chamber, two stained-glass windows have been given, one of them the first of a series, representing the principal events in the life of the patron saint. The whole series has been already designed; and, for the guidance of future donors, the sketches have been framed and hung up in the church. At Halstead the east window has been filled with stained glass as a memorial to the late owner of Halstead Place; and a four-light window has been placed in Hawkhurst

Church, being the seventh with which the old church is now enriched. An east window, and a memorial window of stained glass have been placed in Stanstead Church.

I have been led on to speak of these interior adornings of the several churches enumerated, in connection with the memories enshrined in the restored church of Bexley; but I must revert to the proceedings, in historic order, of the past year, to make mention of the reopening, by the Archbishop, of Westerham Church, not many days after that of Bexley, viz. on the 16th of October, on the completion of works of restoration undertaken at a cost of 5000*l*. The new east window and the reredos were also memorial gifts of the Warde and Streatfeild families; and a striking improvement has been effected in the removal of the old plastered roof, and the substitution of an open roof of oak. The church is now in all respects worthy of its beautiful position.

I have dwelt the rather, my Reverend Brethren, on those offerings for the adorning of our churches which have a memorial character, as bringing to light the amount of private and personal feeling which is confirming and renewing that sacred bond of attachment which binds the hearts of our people, of whatever order and degree, to the Church of their fathers. It was truly said, several years ago, in the speech of a leading Liberationist, in words to which, at the time, I thought it well to

call your attention,—for it was a speech which, in the opinion of a popular journal, went very much out of its way to advocate Disestablishment,—that this, he frankly admitted, was, as he expressed himself, “one of the gravest questions which a people ever had to consider—this question of the abolition of the Established Church.” “It is a question,” said he, “far more important and far more difficult than the question of the extension of the suffrage, or the redistribution of seats”—questions which, it is seasonable at the present moment to observe, are certainly important, and no less certainly difficult;—“it is a question,” said the orator on his chosen topic of Disestablishment, “that goes down deep into the hearts of hundreds of thousands of good men and women in this country, and you cannot by a wrench make a great disturbance of this kind.” And, therefore, he was not asking them, forsooth, or their “constituencies, or any party, or section of a party, to plunge into a violent agitation for the overthrow of the Established Church of England.” He thought “that it would be a great calamity indeed, that a great change like that should come of violent hatred, and that it should be accomplished in a tempest which was almost like the turmoil of a great revolution.” It was not for him, said he, “to join in any crusade against the Church.” He had “offered to” those whom he addressed his “humble contribution to the dis-

cussion of the greatest question of our time;" looking forward to it as, in his opinion, a great day for freedom in this country, and for Protestantism and Christianity, which should "witness the full enfranchisement of the Church within this Realm of England."¹

The advice thus given has not been neglected. We have seen something, and shall doubtless see more, of suggestions, apparently of the most friendly character, addressing themselves to the sense of expediency, adaptation to the spirit of the times and the requirements of the coming age, enlightened policy, and brotherly feeling, and Christian charity. But it was the saying of a deep thinker in the world of political philosophy in the last century, "Confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom." And the Church of Christ has had a long experience, not unaccompanied by sharp trial and grievous suffering, in the lapse of ages, throughout her eventful history, of schemes and designs of plausible aspect and abundant promise, but full, in the end, of bitter disappointment, danger, and ruin to all that she, as the spouse of Christ, under the guidance of His Spirit, watchful over the children committed to her care, must ever hold most precious and dear. That which has been proffered for her acceptance, and pressed upon her, in the apparent

¹ Speech of the Right Hon. John Bright at Birmingham, Jan. 24, reported in *Times*, Jan. 25, 1875. See Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Maidstone in April, 1875 (pp. 21, 22.)

interests of brotherly unity, and with the show of pure religion, has been found, it may be, in the result, productive only of enmity and war; a company of armed men hidden under the specious outward form of an embassy of peace, and an offering of piety and love. But we, my Reverend Brethren, have not forgotten altogether the classical lessons of our early years, or “the tale of Troy divine,”—

“*Quidquid id est, timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*”²

“The full enfranchisement of the Church within this Realm of England” is assuredly an attractive idea; but there is a liberty other than that where-with Christ makes His Church and her children free.³ There were, even in the days of His Apostles and first teachers of His truth, those who, while they promised men liberty were “themselves,” in St. Peter’s language, “the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome,” saith the holy Apostle,—and his words are applicable to many a case of the principles and powers of this world,—“of the same is he brought in bondage.”⁴ The fruit of a fair tree in the very midst of the garden which had been planted by an Almighty hand for man’s enjoyment and culture—and withal for his probation and trial as a moral being, the creature of God—was, to the outward appearance, “good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise:”⁵ but it was “that

² Virgil, *Æn.* ii. 49. ³ Gal. v. 1. ⁴ 2 Pet. ii. 19. ⁵ Gen. iii. 6.

forbidden tree, whose mortal taste," therefore, because it was forbidden by Eternal Wisdom and Omniscient Love,

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden"—

till HE came, the promised Seed of the Woman, who, Himself Incarnate in the human nature taken upon Him of her, foiled the Tempter by faithful recognition of the supreme authority, and willing obedience to the simple command, of His Father's declared will. "It is written," said He; "it is written;" "it is written again."⁶ The Evil One, who had claimed the dominion over this world in all its kingdoms, with all its maxims and rules, and philosophies, and politics, fled at Christ's bidding out of His sight, who was the Truth, the Eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, the Life and the Light of men.

In connection with that first trial of man, and with the blessedness, divinely given, of his state and condition in paradise, let me advert, before I conclude, to two subjects of pressing importance to us of this Church and nation at the present time,—I mean the question of Christian Education, and that of Christian Marriage. In both cases, alike, the Church of Christ has lines drawn for her guidance which are effective and sufficient in their simplicity and integrity; but which, if once we forsake them, leave us without

⁶ St. Matt. iv. 4. 7. 10.

a rudder or a compass on the sea of vague expediency, lawless thought, and ill-regulated desire. As regards Christian Education, the Church's doctrine and practice are plain: her children have been baptized into Christ, and inherit the privileges and responsibilities of that high relation; each one of them by his birthright, and by the chartered blessing of the holy seed, "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Each one of them is to be brought up, accordingly, from his earliest years, with the first dawn of reason, in the knowledge of "the things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health;" holding fast "the form of sound words" which he hath "heard of" them who are his teachers in Divine truth, "in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;"⁷ and taught by them "from a child" to "know the Holy Scriptures," that one record of infallible truth and absolute authority, which, in the hands of Christ's holy Church, is the Divine warrant, against which there is no appeal, for all that she teaches, and is "able to make" her children "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."⁸ For, in her hands, that sacred volume is not a mere assemblage of ancient writings, of uncertain authorship and various authority and credibility,—as we are to gather from the doubtful speculations, to be naturalized

⁷ 2 Tim. i. 13.

⁸ Ibid. ch. iii. 15.

among ourselves, of foreign schools of so-called "criticism,"—but the writings of "holy men" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"⁹ under an inspiring influence which Christ's apostles fully recognized and reverently maintained, though they did not attempt to define its mysterious modes of operation: it is acknowledged nevertheless to be, in its Divine unity, the holy Bible, the Book of books, "all Scripture given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."¹ And while the Church places it in the hands of her children, as they grow on, and puts into their lips the good confession of her Creed, they have an anchorage of which those are deprived, to their grievous harm and loss, who, by the hypothesis on which they are brought up—or, rather, are left to bring themselves up,—are bidden to make out of the Bible, read without note or comment of a catechetical kind, (if, indeed, it is to be read in our schools at all) a self-chosen form of religion; each man being left to himself to frame his own religious or irreligious system, his chosen agnosticism, or utter unbelief. And it is here that we have, so far as regards education, the great question of the day.

Thus much in reference to the claims of that

⁹ 2 Pet. i. 21.

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

“fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,” access to which is offered on all hands, and highly commended to us, as “of a tree to be desired to make one wise.” And then in regard to the still earlier revelation, in the same book of Genesis, of the law of Marriage in its Divine origination and its primeval blessing, we have in the Church of Christ, teaching and acting under His own immediate sanction, as He spake when He stood among us, and taught “as one having authority, and not as the scribes,”² the one law of Him who made man at the beginning, guarded that holy ordinance against the licence and hardness of men’s hearts, and restored it Himself to its first dignity and purity.³ We have in the authoritative teaching of the Church of God a rule to go by, both in regard to the sacredness of the marriage-bond itself, forbidding man to put asunder what God hath joined together, and also laying down the limits which His laws sanction, as to the degrees of kindred and affinity within which alone, in order to the purity of family relations, marriage may be solemnized. And if the rule of God’s Word, as received by His Church, be thought lightly of, and cast away, we have no rule whatever left us, save the uncertainties of human philosophy, or secular expe-

² St. Matt. vii. 29.

³ Ibid. ch. xix. 4. 8. Comp. ch. v. 27—32; St. Mark x. 2—12; St. Luke xvi. 17, 18.

diency, the practice of Greece and Rome, or the provisions of some "Code Napoleon."

The annals of heathen Rome, in the days of its corruption and degeneracy, exhibit fearfully the results of facilities given for divorce. The poet thoughtfully and sorrowfully says,—

"Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam populumque fluxit." ⁴

We find, on the other hand, Christ's Apostle, in that age of laxity and licence, tracing out reverentially, for the guidance of the Churches, what "the Lord" had Himself declared with His own Divine authority on the subject of Marriage, and proceeding to follow it on, under the teaching of that "Spirit of God" whose presence and guidance Christ had promised to His Church, and of which the Apostle felt assured he fully partook; and in accordance with which he gave his "judgment as one that had found mercy of the Lord to be faithful."⁵ For this is undoubtedly the import of the Apostle's words.⁶ And the sacred lines which Christ and His Apostles had laid down, the Church, in all ages from that time onward, in her councils and her courts, has reverently observed and followed. Facilities

⁴ Horat. Od. III. vi. 19, 20.

"Fecunda culpæ sæcula nuptias
Primum inquinavere, et genus, et domos;
Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam populumque fluxit."

⁵ 1 Cor. vii. 10; 12. 17. 25.

⁶ See Note D.

given, under another system, by man's law, for re-marriage after divorce, it cannot be doubted, have had the effect, continually, of making hopeless and irremediable breaches which otherwise might have been healed; or have themselves been the very occasion of those breaches, in the fickleness of earthly fancy; or have led, by culpable negligence or even of cruel purpose, to the violations of the law of purity, which were then pleaded as sufficient causes for the absolute severance of the marriage tie between those who had once, as in God's presence and with His Church's blessing, been joined together in bonds which death only could part. And the tragic complications arising out of such departures from God's holy Word and ordinance, however welcome to the writers of fiction—unhappily, oftentimes and specially, female novelists,—exhibit in their tangled plots what, in the world of actual life, are found to be the sure workings of sin and shame and misery.

It must be regarded meanwhile, by Churchmen, as, so far, a satisfaction—or at least an essential mitigation of their distress—that, if what has been dispensations by private Acts, in the omnipotence of Parliament, were destined to become the common law of England, it was an entirely new Civil Court of Probate and Divorce which was created for the purpose, based only on the sanctions of temporal law, and having no connection

with ecclesiastical machinery, or the tribunal which was wont to deal with these matters of spiritual cognizance, the ancient "Prerogative Court of Canterbury."

May we, my Reverend Brethren, and our lay brethren, with us, guardians, so far as in us lies, of the principles of Christ's holy Church, and the sanctities which have surrounded, from the days of our forefathers, the hearths and homes of England, hold on our consistent course, as best we may, amidst the difficulties, the temptations and trials, of "the course of this world," and the perils of "the latter days." Let us, to the utmost of our power, fulfil the part of faithful Christians and true Churchmen; devoted patriots, lovers of our country and our brethren, and loyal subjects of our Queen, in maintaining and handing on, so far as in us lies, whole and undefiled the faith and the practice of earlier days, in humble dependence upon HIM who hath been the Guide and Defender of His people, "our dwelling-place," and "our refuge, from one generation to another."⁷ May He grant that, by the rightly-guided counsels of our legislators, in the realm committed to the hands of her who is still by God's grace and mercy, and by the possession of a Christian kingdom and empire, a "religious" as well as a "gracious Queen," "all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours upon the best

⁷ Ps. xc. 1.

and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations"! And so may that blessing still be vouchsafed to this Church and nation which Solomon entreated, at God's footstool of mercy, from heaven His dwelling-place, for His people Israel, in the winding up of his solemn prayer at the dedication of the temple,—“The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not fail us, nor forsake us: that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and judgments, which he commanded our fathers.”^s

^s 1 Kings viii. 57, 58.

AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED TO THE CHURCHWARDENS AND
SIDESMEN OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF
MAIDSTONE, AT THE VISITATION

IN APRIL, 1885

AN ADDRESS.

MY BRETHREN OF THE LAITY, CHURCHWARDENS AND
SIDESMEN, IN OFFICE OR ELECT,—

I have great pleasure in meeting you again, under God's providence, assembled in due order, at the accustomed places of Visitation in the Arch-deaconry, to make your presentments, and to be admitted, or readmitted, to your several offices for the ensuing year.

The arrangement which was made some years ago, for the citation of the newly-elected churchwardens to attend at an Easter Visitation of the Archdeacon, though the clergy are not summoned, in view of a Visitation to be held by the Diocesan himself later in the year, is an arrangement specially desirable when it is the Primary Visitation of the Diocesan which is about to be held. It was formerly the custom to postpone the admission of the new churchwardens to the time of the Diocesan's Visitation ; with this inconvenience attending it, that the duration of office in the successive years was very unequally divided ; the churchwardens of the one year having to serve for a year and a half or so, and those of the other for

only half a year. It was another and a greater disadvantage that, in this way, the outgoing churchwardens of whom the inquiries had been made, and who were responsible for the present condition of things in the several parishes, would, at the visitation, cease at once to have the power to supply what was wanting, or to correct what was amiss; this duty being necessarily left to those who at present knew nothing officially of the circumstances of the parish. By the arrangement now in force the new churchwardens, admitted thus after Easter, have some three or four months in which to put everything, if need be, in order, and so to meet, more satisfactorily to the Diocesan himself, and to all concerned, the visitation to be held by him. Of our own Archbishop it may be truly said, in regard to matters which are the special care of the churchwarden's office, the state of the churches, not only that he brings to every subject which comes under his notice the most minute and painstaking attention, but also that his Grace is both a well-instructed student of church architecture, and also, I may say, a practical architect himself. On occasions of restoration of churches in the reopening of which he has taken part, the Archbishop has given evidence of a deep interest in their past history, and the changes through which, in successive ages, they have passed; keenly alive to the evidence afforded of the continuity, from one generation to another, of

the sacred fabrics in which the worship of God has been celebrated in the one old Church of England. For it is our privilege indeed to enter into the heritage of our fathers, and to possess their labours,—the enlargements and adaptations made from time to time, as new wants have arisen; witness to which is borne continually in points full of interest, to be traced in the various styles of Saxon, or Norman, or Pointed architecture, which tell a tale that may be read by intelligent eyes in the walls, the arches, the pillars, and windows of our ancient churches.

I took occasion, when addressing the Clergy at my visitation last year, to refer to one instance of this which had been brought out very clearly into view by the Archbishop in his sermon at the reopening of the church of Bexley. He pointed out in regard to that church,—a church in the old deanery of Shoreham, under the Peculiar jurisdiction of the archbishop,—how its history might be traced for a thousand and fifty years; how through that long period there had been a sacred fabric for divine worship, first of wood, and then of stone, both in Anglo-Saxon times, and so on to the fourteenth century; the building in that century presenting features of beauty which it was the object of the recent restoration to reproduce, at the same time that it made greatly increased provision for the rapidly growing population of our own time. And the history of

Bexley Church is essentially, as I observed, the history of many others; in some cases revealed in the stones of the hallowed building, in others bearing silent witness to the pious and charitable works of men who have left, in the record of their time, no memorial, but of whom it may be said in the words of patriarchal piety, that their "witness is in heaven," and their "record is on high."¹

The *continuity* of the Church of England is, my brethren, a point which it is of the greatest importance to have deeply fixed in our hearts and minds, amidst the conflicts and threatenings of the present age. From the way in which some people commonly speak, you might suppose that the Church of England was an institution first set up at the time of the Reformation, and which came into the place of an earlier Church of Rome; whereas the truth is that our Reformers, in the days of Henry VIII. and of Queen Elizabeth, did but revive and restore, under the guidance of God's good providence, aiding their own deep learning and their thoughtful conscientious care, the old Church of our land, which had been planted in this island of Britain long before even the mission of Augustine to Anglo-Saxon England. Cranmer, and Ridley, and Parker, and those who worked with them and followed them, took their stand, as the prophet of old bade his coun-

¹ Job xvi. 19.

trymen “stand in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, which was the good way, and walk therein,” that they might “find rest unto” their “souls.”² By calm and patient study of the records and remains of earlier times, the histories and liturgies and creeds of primitive antiquity and apostolic teaching, they did what we their sons have in these days oftentimes done in the faithful restoration of our old parish churches. They found the Church of their own days disfigured by things which were supposed to be part of the original design of the “one holy Catholic Church” planted by Christ’s Apostles and their successors in all lands; but which were found, when examined, to be really insertions of later days, made by the authority of a foreign Church, the Church of Rome, whose bishop had, by God’s Word and primitive practice, no such “jurisdiction” as had been erroneously assigned to him “in this realm of England.” Our Reformers took away things which were discovered to be corruptions, the work of an enemy, or things which, right and good and well intended in their origin, had, in this evil world, become sources of mischief or danger, and were out of harmony with the pure system into which they had been incorporated. They laboured,—if I may use the words of one of the Church’s prayers for the visitation of the sick, they laboured—to “renew” whatever

² Jer. vi. 16.

had “ been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by ” the “ carnal will and frailness ” of the Church’s own children ; they desired to “ preserve and continue this sick member ” of the Church’s body, the English branch of it, “ in the unity of the Church ”—the true unity and not the false, the unity of the one body of Christ, “ the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here in earth.” Let me borrow language from our own works of church restoration, and say, they did what we have often done in our churches, taking away obstructive and inadequate galleries, and pews of strange size and fittings, and exhibiting again the fair proportions of the sacred edifice ; and making larger and better provision for the spiritual company of worshippers. They did not, meanwhile, like some unwise restorers and ultra-reformers, attempt to reproduce exactly what they imagined was the precise character, in all respects, of the building as dealt with by the architects of some one age. The superstructure might in many respects vary, while the foundation was the same ; Wisdom was “ justified of her children,”³ even when her manifold and practised art developed itself the most freely, in its transitions from one style to another. For it was a living temple that was to be raised by her hands, when she “ builded her house,” and had “ hewn

³ St. Matt. xi. 19 ; St. Luke vii. 35.

out her seven pillars ;”⁴ it was “built,” indeed, “upon the one foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone ; in whom,” as saith the Apostle, “the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord ; in whom,” saith he, “ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”⁵

It was thus that our forefathers, in the days of the Church’s Reformation, regarded her ; not as something which they could create or establish, as part of a political system of their own devising. They knew only of *one* Church, planted and established by Christ Himself and His Apostles ; and we must enter thoroughly into this view of things, if we would understand what we are dealing or proposing to deal with, when men talk, as they do in these days, with so little knowledge, of “disestablishment of the Church,” as if it were a question of such a kind as whether the State should give up some minor department of the public service, which the State adopted yesterday, and might drop, if it thought fit, and saw occasion for it, to-day or to-morrow ; some hitherto protected interest, to be left henceforth to the free action of the law of demand and supply ; to make its own way, on the system of “limited liability,” commercial combination, or private adventure. It is quite a different view which our great Reformers and

⁴ Prov. ix. 1.

⁵ Eph. ii. 20—22.

statesmen took in regard to the Church and the State of England ; and the view they took was none other than that which is deeply impressed on our Formularies, on our Prayer Book and the Creeds which it embodies. And it is a very simple question, after all, that is concerned. For if we were asked what we are ourselves, each of us, in regard to religious profession, we should doubtless say that we were Christians, and that the body to which we belonged was the Church of Christ : and if we were then asked at what time that body came into being, we should all say, I suppose, that it was founded by Christ ; we should none of us be content to assign to our faith or our Church any later date, or any other origin ; we should claim to belong to that one body of which we read so much in the New Testament, in the Gospels first, and then more fully in the Acts and the Epistles. That one body, of the privileges and duties of which St. Paul discoursed with his converts and brethren at Rome or at Corinth, in Galatia or at Ephesus,⁶—the one body, governed and sanctified by one Spirit,⁷ even as we are “ called in one hope of our calling,” with “ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,”⁸—this body, we should all of us say, and willingly declare, is that to which we belong. We are members,

⁶ Compare particularly Rom. xii. ; 1 Cor. xii. ; Gal. iii. ; Eph. i.—iv.

⁷ Second Collect for Good Friday.

⁸ Eph. iv. 1—6.

meanwhile, of this nation or that, and each nation has had its own history ; there has been a kingdom of England now many hundred years, a body politic, formed by the union of many lesser sovereignties joined under one head. But it is a far older body which we claim to be members of, when, in the Creed which we have been taught from our infancy, we profess, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," or in the Nicene Confession which we recite in every Sunday's Service, "I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church."

And when we realize this profession of our faith, the relations of "Church and State," as we commonly speak, fall at once into their true position. In the solemn prayer, for instance, "for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth," recognizing its essential oneness, we offer our supplications to the Divine Majesty, beseeching Him who is the Almighty and ever-living God, "to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord," and to "grant that all they that do confess His holy Name may agree in the truth of His holy Word, and live in unity and godly love." Then follows the petition that He would "save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governours ;" the several kingdoms and dominions committed to their care being portions of that larger body, with its Divine and essential unity. Observing, unconsciously and as a matter of course, the same

order of ideas in our common manner of speaking, we speak familiarly, as I have said, of "Church and State," and "Church and King;" the priority of place, in the order of thought, assigned to the Church bearing silent witness to the true date and origin of each. We are Englishmen; and, when we unroll the records of our national history, we can tell when first the kingdom of England had a collective existence: but the kings of the Heptarchy knew of a Church in England long before them, a Church which they did not themselves create or establish, nor their people, but to which they had been in their baptism admitted. No Englishman could ever frame his lips to speak of "State and Church," or "King and Church"—it would go counter to the instincts of his nature, and the simplest usage of his mother tongue. And it is to be observed, moreover, that, as we find in the annals of our history, and in the theory of our constitution, as statesmen described it and Acts of Parliament bear witness to it, that the Royal authority, the Crown of England, in its recognized duty, and by the privilege of office claimed by godly princes, under the authority of God's Word,⁹ was designed to be, and was, to a great extent in its exercise, a powerful protector of the Church against the encroachments of the See of Rome, so, on the other hand, the essential unity of the Church of Christ in all lands

⁹ Article xxxvii.

is the most effective denial of the pretended unity, far other in reality, to which the Bishop of Rome lays claim, as dependent on absolute obedience to him and to his chair.

The subject immediately before us is of no small importance, my brethren, at the present time, and in the present circumstances of our country: it is a question which nearly concerns the safety and welfare of this Church and nation. There are those, very active in the prosecution of their design, who inscribe on their banners the profession that they desire not simply to carry out what they regard as the principles of "civil and religious liberty" in the behalf of those whom they consider aggrieved in the matter of their personal rights and privileges, but also to emancipate and set free the Church from State control. Notice was given in Parliament last year of a Resolution of the House of Commons to be moved to this effect, not only "that the establishment of the Church of England by law imposes upon Parliament duties which it cannot effectually discharge;" not only that it "inflicts injustice," so it is alleged, "on a large section of the community, and is injurious to the political and religious interests of the nation;" but also, which is the most remarkable part of the *gravamen*, that it "deprives the Church of the power of managing her own affairs." It might not, perhaps, antecedently have been expected that solicitude for the

Church's independence, and for the free exercise by her of the right of managing her own affairs, would have been so prominently put forward by those without her pale. And it may well be doubted whether such a restoration of the Church's freedom as is here held forth as a boon to her members, would have the effect of bringing any number—or perhaps any at all—back to her bosom, from the ranks of those who are supposed to be withheld by her present relations to the State from conforming to her ritual, and worshipping in her courts. Be this, however, as it may, the question which is flaunted now, in conspicuous characters, on the banners of those who can hardly be counted otherwise than as those who “wish not well to our Sion,” the question of “disestablishment,” is one which is to be brought, as soon as the opportunity arrives, as a watchword of political party, before that large body of our fellow-countrymen on whom the electoral franchise is shortly to be conferred.

It is a matter of heavy responsibility which is thus laid upon men who have never had brought under their practical consideration, amidst the duties of their daily work, questions with which they will find themselves suddenly called upon to deal. There is, happily, a great amount of good sense and sound judgment in the character of our countrymen, which may well make us less apprehensive than we might otherwise be of the results

in such a case. But at the same time men are liable from time to time to be carried away by strong impulses, when feeling is awakened under the influence of party organization and unscrupulous statement of matters of fact very important, but very imperfectly understood. Our Church and country, however, through God's protecting mercy, have been carried safely through critical periods of their history; and we may humbly trust that the same guardian goodness will guide and preserve us to the end. It will be our duty, meanwhile, to do what in us lies that our countrymen, with new obligations laid upon them, and with the most sacred interests committed to their charge, may be duly prepared, as well-instructed Englishmen and faithful Churchmen, in the cause of their brethren, their country, and their God.

There are some Churchmen, I am well aware, who have been disposed, like those of whom I have spoken in the enemy's camp, to anticipate benefit to accrue to the Church if "disestablishment" were carried into effect. But it must never be forgotten that "disestablishment" means nothing less than the dethroning HIM from His supreme dominion in the kingdoms of the world who is "the First begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth;"¹ and that "disendowment," its certain and inseparable companion, is

¹ Rev. i. 5.

the robbing Him, and His Church, of the gifts which were bestowed upon them, in the days of our forefathers, by the large-hearted and pious bounty of the lords of the soil, in a land like this, its kings, its princes, and its nobles. It is true, indeed, that the violence and injustice of the persecutor, robbery and death, have been made, by God's over-ruling providence, bringing good out of evil, to advance the cause of His kingdom; "and the blood of the martyrs" has been "the seed of the Church." But "disestablishment and disendowment" would involve in them the sin of "National Apostasy." And though we know that, by the strength of Christ's promise, the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church, in its Divine unity and perpetuity, yet there is no such absolute pledge given to any one branch of that Church: and Christendom has seen many a Church, national though it were, and many a country which once was Christian, forsaken by its Divine Head, and its candlestick removed out of its place, because of unfaithfulness to Him, and its heritage given over to the possession of the unbeliever. And a Church and realm, like that of England, if it rejected and robbed Him, its Redeemer and Saviour and King, might justly expect to hear a voice sounding in its palaces and halls, like that which was heard in the courts of the temple in the last days of Jerusalem's probation, "LET US DEPART HENCE."

May it please Him who hath shown such favour and loving-kindness to this nation and kingdom from the days of old, to preserve it from such sin and such a punishment. May He vouchsafe His heavenly blessing to the faithful endeavours of His servants, whether clergy or laity, who, in their several offices in His Church for His people's sake shall strive to maintain, in its integrity, the heritage which we have received from our fathers, to be handed down unimpaired, and with continually extended efficiency and usefulness, by God's grace, to those who shall come after.

From Him alone cometh all grace, and to Him be all the glory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

ON the subject of abstract Resolutions of the House of Commons, the following observations were contained in a Report presented to the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, by the Committee on "Petitions and Matters Parliamentary," May 16, 1884 [Report, No. 169].

After reporting divers Bills, at that time before Parliament, the Report went on to say :—

"The Committee fully recognize that it is not, on general principles, their office to consider, or to invite consideration by the House of the particular way in which members of either House of Parliament see fit to bring forward, or prepare the way for measures which they desire to recommend to the favour of Parliament. At the same time it appears to the Committee appointed by the Lower House of Convocation to deal with 'Petitions and Matters Parliamentary,' that they ought to make the House fully cognizant of any new circumstances, in the procedure of Parliament, which tend in any way seriously to affect the functions of the Committee itself and the action of the Lower House. With this view the Committee feel bound to notice the apparently growing disposition, in members of the Lower House of the Legislature, to deal with questions, on which legislation is desired, in the way of Resolutions as preparatory to Bills. The regular and constitutional action of the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury is well ascertained and clear; whether in calling attention to measures in hand for the information of the Clergy and Laity of the Church in its several dioceses and parishes, or in requesting the action of their Lordships of the Upper House, should the measures in progress come in due course before the Lords. In regard, on the other hand, to a general Resolution, not containing in detail (as would be the case in a Bill as ordinarily prepared and brought into the House), the particular provisions proposed, which might essentially affect the second reading of

a Bill, yet meanwhile committing the House still more distinctly and absolutely to the principle of the Bill, there is no opportunity given, as in the case of Bills before Parliament, for petitions from Clergy or Laity. Nor is it possible, obviously, to invoke the action of their Lordships of the Upper House of Convocation and of Parliament, in opposition to such Resolutions or in amendment of them.

“As an instance of this, the Committee would recall to mind the Resolution lately moved in the House of Commons, but rejected there, against the Bishops retaining their seats in the House of Lords.

“On four important subjects notice has been given to the House of Commons of Resolutions to be moved :—

“1. A Resolution to be moved by Mr. Dillwyn ‘in regard to the Church of England in Wales, declaring that its continuance as an Established Church in the Principality is an anomaly and an injustice which ought no longer to exist.’ He was prepared for the second reading on May 9 ; but it was dropped amidst the pressure of the business before the House.

“2. In regard to the Tithe Rent Charge, Mr. Selater Booth gives notice of a Resolution, ‘to call the attention to the Report of the Royal Agricultural Commission on Tithe Rent Charge, and to move, That means ought to be provided for facilitating its redemption.’

“3. On the subject of ‘Marriage with a Deceased Wife’s Sister,’ the Committee reported in February last, that the Bill, having been rejected last year by the House of Lords, had been again brought into the House of Commons by Mr. Broadhurst : and that the second reading was fixed for March 26. The Bill not being moved on that day, and having thus become a ‘dropped Bill,’ notice was given by Mr. Broadhurst of a Resolution on the subject, to this effect, ‘That in view of the painful and unnecessary hardships inflicted upon large numbers of people in this country by the law prohibiting marriage with a deceased wife’s sister, it is the opinion of this House that a measure of relief is urgently called for.’ This Resolution having been carried, May 6, notice has been given, on the strength of it, of a Bill to be brought forward again in the House of Lords. In view of the renewed agitation, pressed forward as the subject

is now by interested parties, endeavouring to enlist on its behalf every kind of influence and agency, the Committee are compelled to repeat what they expressed, under similar circumstances, in their report presented last year, their earnest desire that their Lordships of the Upper House would give it their most earnest and united opposition. In their last Report of February 14, 1884, the Committee had 'thankfully to record that such opposition was given by the whole Bench as resulted, happily, in the rejection of the Bill on the third reading.' The Committee can now only repeat their hope and desire, in the prospect of such a Bill coming again before the Lords, that their Lordships the Bishops will meet it again with the same earnest and united opposition which they offered to it in the last Session of Parliament, and with the same success.

"The Committee think it important to observe that, in some cases, a Resolution of the House of Commons has to all intents and purposes, for the present time, the same effect as if the law were repealed. Of this there is at the present time, since the passing of a certain Resolution by the House of Commons in the last Session of Parliament, an instance in regard to the Contagious Diseases Acts; of which it must be said, without reference to points on which difference of opinion exists, that the present position of things under the operation of the Resolution in question, affects in a most serious way the moral condition of our great cities, and, in particular, of our garrison towns."

Members of Parliament, it is to be observed, care the less, in regard to general Resolutions of the House, inasmuch as such Resolutions involve no actual proceeding of a legislative character. Such Resolutions, however, have meanwhile, it cannot be questioned, a powerful influence on public opinion, and specially with reference to the feasibility of effective opposition in the way of petitions; they do also, as a matter of fact, obviously tend to facilitate future movements in the direction of change, carrying with them, virtually, not only something like leave to bring in a Bill, but also something like a second reading of the Bill, and the supposed carrying of the *principle*, leaving only details to be dealt with in Committee.

NOTE B.

The general results of this inquiry are embodied in the published Report [No. 182] of the "Joint Committee of Convocation on the Spiritual Needs of the Masses of the People." The Committee was appointed by a Resolution of the Upper House, April 10, 1883, "to consider whether the Church ought to take any, and if so what, special action to meet the spiritual needs of the great masses of the population, especially in large towns." His Grace the President appointed the Bishop of Winchester to act as Chairman, and the Bishop of Rochester as Convener. Returns were received from 379 deaneries; and of the more important of them a condensed account is given in the Report, which was presented February 8, 1885, and in a large Appendix to it. With other Reports of Committees of Convocation, it is sold at the National Society's Depository, Westminster. Price 6d.

NOTE C.

To one of the returns made to me from the Rural Deans of my Archdeaconry, I feel bound specially to refer. The Rural Dean of Croydon, and vicar of the parish, states freely, in the forefront of his letter, that, in his opinion, "there are a great many people, more especially among the labouring classes, who are not at present reached by the Church; and I attribute this state of things," he goes on to say, "partly to *ordinary* causes (the world, the flesh, and the devil), and partly to the extraordinary growth of the town of Croydon, which has rendered it impossible for the Church to overtake the spiritual needs of the population." He adds an important note, "N.B. There are, however, 19 Churches in the Deanery, of which 15 have been erected since the year 1828. There are also 15 Mission buildings, in which services are regularly held, and in 4 of which the Sacraments are administered. Most of these buildings are of quite recent establishment." In addition to these Churches, it should be said now, a new Church, St. Augustine's, in South Croydon, has been built and consecrated since the above return was made; and there is at the present time a design in hand for another Mission Chapel in immediate connection with the parish Church.

In connection with these efforts, he reported that, "as far as he understood it, the judgment of the clergy of the Deanery was in favour of increased activity in the use of ordinary methods, rather than in the adoption of special methods. Personally," he said, "I believe in ordinary methods vigorously used ; at the same time it seems to me desirable"—and of this, it may be added, he gave abundant proof in his own person—"to show as much sympathy as possible with any special methods that may be adopted (within or without the Church) without compromising the order and discipline of the Church." In regard to a certain agency, without the lines of the Church, which has attracted much attention, he found himself compelled to express the opinion, that its work was "calculated to do as much harm, in the way of spreading disorder, irreverence, and false assurance, as it is likely to do good in the way of awakening a few hardened characters."

I would call attention to the way in which he speaks of "the ordinary causes" which hinder the cause of religion among the masses of our people ; because there is a tendency, I cannot but think, in the present day to forget the adverse operation of the great enemies of our salvation, the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and that the opposition or indifference which have so wide, and so unhappy an influence are witnesses,—perhaps to a greater extent than men are apt to believe,—that it is the very truth of God which His Church ministers, with whatever imperfection of the earthly agents, and which a corrupted and fallen nature rejects and speaks evil of, because of the contrariety between light and darkness, truth and falsehood. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ;" they are the words of our Divine Master and Lord to His Apostles, and, in them, to His Church even to the end of the world.

"Let the world take us as she may,
We must not change our road."

There was a time when it was said of Christ's preaching and ministry, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him ;" but a week had not passed when "the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate," and there was only one voice heard on every side, one cry raised,

“Crucify him, crucify him!” Of a truth “the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household.”

NOTE D.

It has been supposed by some persons, that, in this passage, the Apostle makes a distinction between things which he spoke by Divine authority and others which rested simply on his own individual human opinion. But, I apprehend, there is no ground for doubting that, according to the true interpretation of his words, the distinction which he draws is between the things which Christ “the Lord” had Himself, by His own lips, authoritatively declared and those which the Apostle, in the exercise of his ministry, by virtue of his Apostolic authority, and in the power of the Spirit which Christ had given for the guidance of His Church, laid down as a rule for the members of the Christian body. Certain principles he stated, and certain advice he gave, “by permission, and not of commandment;” for they were not the subject of absolute command, one way or the other (1 Cor. vii. 6). He went on, however, on another point to give an express command—“I command,” adding at the same time, “yet not I, but the Lord.” For the command in question, “Let not the wife depart from her husband,” was what Christ Himself had declared, in regard to the strictness of the marriage bond; involving in it the command further, “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife.” All this rests upon Christ’s own sayings in the Gospel (St. Matt. v. 22; xix. 4—9; Mark x. 5—12; Luke xvi. 18). “But of the rest,” the Apostle goes on to say, “speak I, not the Lord.” He was dealing with questions, arising out of the relations of Christians with unbelievers, with which questions the Lord had not dealt (vv. 12—17). And then “concerning virgins,” he had no commandment of the Lord, delivered by Christ Himself, and recorded in the Gospel; and therefore the Apostle gave his judgment therein, as one that had “obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful” (v. 25). And his words at the *close* of the whole

discussion, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God," imply no doubt that he was speaking thereon with full Apostolic authority, and declaring what was the mind of the Spirit. And the principles thus handed down from Christ and His Apostles, and embodied in the canons and laws of the Church Catholic, in regard to the indissoluble character of the marriage bond, with permission given, if unhappily required, for separation, as distinguished from divorce *à vinculo*, are the principles which the canons of the Church of England, and the maxims and practice of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury have faithfully and uniformly maintained.

The writer ought, perhaps, to offer apology for the delay which has occurred in the publication of this Charge and Address. It is unnecessary now to enter into particulars. There were some points touched on in the Charge which he thought might with advantage be supplemented in Notes to be appended; but of these matters some have, meanwhile, been rather cast into the shade by others which have lately reasserted their claims to paramount attention. And the primary Visitation of the Archbishop, coming last autumn, made it less fitting for the subordinate authority, during the accustomed period of inhibition, to intervene with any utterance of a visitational character.







